

## **Child Protection at *St. Colman's N.S.***

Schools have an obligation to provide pupils with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm. School personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behaviour, failure to develop or outward signs of abuse in children.

- Mindful of this primary duty of care, the Board of Management of St. Colman's N.S., fully endorses "Children First", the designated guidelines for the protection and welfare of children as issued by the Department of Health and Children, September 1999 and "Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures" from the Department of Education & Science, April 2001.
- The Board nominates Mary O'Brien as the designated liaison person (DLP) to act as a liaison with outside agencies such as health board and as a resource person to any staff having child protection concerns.
- In the absence of Mary O'Brien, Patricia O'Mahony will act as Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLp).
- The Board will ensure that appropriate and on going training as necessary will be available for DLP and the DDLp.
- The Board fully endorses arrangements for the vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff as outlined in Circular 0094/2006, June 2006, for the Department of Education & Science.
- The Board will ensure that all school staff, teaching and non-teaching are aware of their obligations under the guidelines detailed in Children first and the procedures to be followed in the event of concern.
- The Board recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending St. Colman's N.S. The Board as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.
- As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.
- The Board will adhere to the protocol outlined in Ch. 4. Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse of School Employees, in "Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures" from the Department of Education & Science 2001, to authorise any actions required to protect the children in its care. The Board notes that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations.

Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Board accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.

- The Board believes that the academic, personal and social development of children flourishes in a culture where good relationships are encouraged, people feel valued and respected and appropriate support is available for those in difficulty.
- The Board is committed to the maintenance of the environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to. All children in the school will be made aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. In addition, opportunities will be included in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to keep them safe.
- The Board undertakes to circulate this Child Protection policy statement to all parents and guardians at time of enrolment and on a regular basis thereafter. This policy statement and "Children First" will be available for viewing at the school office.
- This policy statement regarding Child Protection at St.Colman's N.S. applies to all staff, members of the Board of Management and volunteers working in the school.
- This policy statement will be subject to review at the start of each academic year.